

MEMORANDUM
RM-5871-AID/ARPA
MARCH 1969

**SEMINAR ON DEVELOPMENT
AND SECURITY IN THAILAND: PART I
THE INSURGENCY**

Hans Heymann, Jr., Editor

PREPARED FOR:
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND THE
ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY

The RAND Corporation
SANTA MONICA • CALIFORNIA

MEMORANDUM
RM-5871-AID/ARPA
MARCH 1969

**SEMINAR ON DEVELOPMENT
AND SECURITY IN THAILAND: PART I
THE INSURGENCY**

Hans Heymann, Jr., Editor

This research is supported in part by the Agency for International Development, Department of State, under Contract No. AID/FE-312, and in part by the Advanced Research Projects Agency under Contract No. DAHC 15 67 C 0142. Views or conclusions contained in this study should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of AID or ARPA.

The RAND Corporation
1700 MAIN ST. • SANTA MONICA • CALIFORNIA • 90406

PREFACE

This Memorandum is Part I of a two-part conference record, summarizing the discussions of, and reproducing the papers contributed to, a Seminar on the Relationship between Development and Security, with Special Reference to Thailand. The Seminar was organized by The RAND Corporation under the joint sponsorship of the Agency for International Development (AID) of the Department of State, and the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) of the Department of Defense. It was held at The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California, on November 16-18, 1967.

The idea of the Seminar was originally proposed to AID by its Academic Advisory Council for Thailand (AACT) and strongly seconded by the U.S. AID Mission in Bangkok. The hope was that a confrontation of academic and government views on the nexus between development and security might help to clarify relevant concepts, so that both U.S. research priorities and the focus of U.S. assistance programs in Thailand might be sharpened.

Invited participants in the Seminar, therefore, included knowledgeable government officials both from Bangkok and Washington, as well as area specialists and generalists from the academic community and from RAND. The list of participants is shown on p. vii.

In the preparation of this conference record, the most onerous task fell upon Miss Val Laffin who acted as Seminar Rapporteur and who produced a meticulously edited transcript of the proceedings. Substantial assistance in summarizing the discussions was also provided by Mrs. Eleanor Wainstein.

Unclassified papers presented at the Seminar appear in the companion Memorandum, RM-5872-AID/ARPA, Seminar on Development and Security in Thailand: Part II, Development-Security Interactions, March 1969 (For Official Use Only).

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

SEMINAR FOCUS

The Seminar on Development and Security in Thailand set itself the task of examining four principal problem areas:

(1) The development-security interrelationship. -- The aim was to review the present state of knowledge concerning the effect of economic, social and political change on such security-relevant factors as: (a) susceptibility of the population to political organization and manipulation; (b) adequacy of leadership, administration, governmental authority; (c) demands upon and provision of governmental services, including preservation of law and order; (d) behavior of relevant groups (village youth, civil servants, urban elites, etc.). Examination of these factors was to be aimed at contemporary Thailand and specifically, but not exclusively, at the Northeast. The question posed in short, was: "What can we observe about the consequences of environmental changes such as more education, more population, higher incomes, accelerated governmental activity, and more urban jobs, for key aspects of the body politic?"

(2) The efficacy of the insurrectionary movement. -- The intent was to explore the current and potential capabilities of the insurgent organization as to exploit systematically the inadequacies of and the pressures upon the established authority structure.

(3) The relevance of programs. -- Given the existing tensions within the structure and the insurgents' ability to exploit these tensions, it is important to know whether U.S. AID and Thai government programs are appropriate to the problem.

(4) The most urgent tasks for research. -- It was hoped that the Seminar would pin-point the most pressing researchable questions and thus help in establishing priorities for future research.

SEMINAR ORGANIZATION

The Seminar was conducted in five successive sessions, each of three hours' duration, and each organized around one of the following five topics:

(1) Development-Security Interactions -- The Conceptual Framework

Underlying assumptions of scholars and policymakers about the development-security relationship. What are the implicit theories or explicit doctrines guiding analysis and policies?

(2) Development-Security Interactions -- Special Features of Thailand

Basic factors of rural society in Thailand (particularly in the Northeast) that might impinge on dissidence. Is the villager "isolated" or "involved?" Is security an individual or a state attribute? What observable impact has development had on either at the village level?

(3) The Insurgency: Development Implications

What do we know and not know about the Communist Terrorists (CT)? Recruitment appeals and "alternatives" offered by the insurgents; their tactics and opportunities in exploiting Thai vulnerabilities. How might "development" reduce or enhance these opportunities?

(4) The Program: Focus and Concept

"Protection and Production" as program objectives; possible alternatives -- for example, explicit political development objectives; scatteration versus concentration; impact versus long-run programs. How do we close the gap between U.S. and Royal Thai Government (RTG) priorities?

(5) Research Approaches and Priorities

Within the vast wasteland of the uncertain and the unknown uncovered in the course of the Seminar, which are the most urgent, most feasible, and most promising issues for research? What techniques may be applicable or appropriate?

The present Memorandum reports on only the third and fifth of the above topics and their associated papers; that is, it deals with the insurgency problem area and with the identification of important questions for research in that problem area. The remaining three topics and associated papers are covered in a companion Memorandum, Seminar on Development and Security in Thailand: Part II, Development-Security Interactions, RM-5872-AID/ARPA (For Official Use Only). The main reason for the separation into two parts is one of security classification. The subject matter of Part II bears a lower classification than that of Part I, and can thus be distributed more widely as a separate publication.

SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS

From Bangkok:

Howard L. Parsons, Director, USOM
Charles Stockman, Asst. Director (Programs), USOM
James R. Hoath, Chief, Research Division, USOM
Stephen A. Loftus, Jr., Asst. Director for
Research, ARPA RDFU/T
Lt. Col. George Osborn, ARPA RDFU/T
Richard G. Sharp, RAC -- ARPA RDFU/T

From Washington:

Frederick F. Simmons, Director, Office of SEA
Affairs, AID
Joseph Smith, Deputy Chief, Far East Division,
CIA
Garry L. Quinn, Program Manager, OSD/ARPA/AGILE
Miss Linnea P. Raine, OSD/ARPA/AGILE

From Academia:

Murray Gell-Mann, Institute for Advanced Study,
Princeton University
Richard Lee Hough, Fletcher School of Law and
Diplomacy, Tufts University
Princeton Lyman, Center for International
Affairs, Harvard University
Michael Moerman, Dept. of Anthropology, UCLA
Herbert Phillips, Dept. of Anthropology, UC
Berkeley
David A. Wilson, Dept. of Political Science,
UCLA

From RAND:

Harvey Averch, Economics, Santa Monica
Seyom Brown, Social Science, Washington and
OSD/ISA
Hans Heymann, Jr., Economics, Washington
(Chairman)
Stephen T. Hosmer, Social Science, Santa Monica
Miss Val Laffin, Economics, Santa Monica
(Rapporteur)
Edward J. Mitchell, Economics, Santa Monica
Constantine C. Menges, Social Science, Santa
Monica
Guy Pauker, Social Science, Santa Monica
Robert L. Slichton, Economics, Santa Monica
George K. Tanham, Administration, Washington
Charles Wolf, Jr., Economics, Santa Monica

CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.	v
SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS.	vii
NOTE ON CLASSIFICATION.	xi

Section

I. SEMINAR SESSION.	1
Nature of the Insurgency	1
Appeal and Recruitment of Insurgents	4
Resolving the Uncertainties.	6
Implications for Program Decisions	11
II. CONTRIBUTED PAPERS	13
"Communist Terrorist Operations in Northeast Thailand: Organizational and Psychological Aspects," . . . , Richard G. Sharp	13
"Relating Rebellion to the Environment: An Econometric Approach," Edward J. Mitchell.	28

I. SEMINAR SESSION

(U) The conference session on the development implications of insurgency focused on four aspects of the insurgency in Thailand: first, the actual nature of the insurgency, its size, its stage of development, and its distinguishing features; second, the recruiting methods used by the insurgents and the appeal (or lack of appeal) which the movement appears to hold for the Thai people; third, major uncertainties or unknowns concerning the nature and impact of the insurgency and approaches toward resolving them; and fourth, the implications of the uncertainties for program decisions in the U.S. counterinsurgency assistance effort. Some of the more important points of the discussion are summarized below.

NATURE OF THE INSURGENCY

(U) The Thailand case is probably closer to "pure insurgency" than any other to be found in Asia. It is not bound up with other rebellious movements in Thailand, nor does it have a basis in a tradition of organized dissidence. It is an interesting case in that it lacks a number of features normally associated with insurrectionary movements. Thailand has no tradition of colonialism. There are no organized political structures to build on in the villages -- no stay-behind former Vietminh fighters as in Vietnam. The Northeast has relatively open ground rather than terrain favorable to insurgent activity. On the other hand, in the Northeast there is a heritage of neglect and poverty, and there are significant ethnic differences in the population.

The insurgent movement in Thailand is still quite small numerically, but has been growing substantially in recent years. In 1965 there were 200 to 300 persons involved in the Northeast; today there are approximately 1,300 to 2,000. Activities, as measured by incident rates, increased steadily for some years and then leveled off in the second quarter of 1966. During the same period other areas such as the mid-south and some of the provinces of west central Thailand also experienced increased activity. However, the incident rates for Thailand as

a whole are quite modest by any standard, approximating only about 50 to 75 per month, which means perhaps 10 incidents in any one district within the affected areas. It is estimated that no district in the country averages more than two assassinations a month.

(U) From these few statistics it is evident that the CT operation is small, and at an early stage of development. It does not follow from this that no long-range threat exists. If an insurgent movement begins by having to create a new political structure from the ground up rather than by taking over a previously established movement, it must be expected to have a small and slow beginning. In Thailand the insurgents are engaged in building a core political organization, or "infrastructure," and there is ample evidence of growth, increased planning, and coordination of activity. For example, prior to mid-1967, armed propaganda meetings -- a group of armed insurgents entering a village and forcing the villagers to attend a meeting -- were occurring at a rate of perhaps 3 or 4 per month. Suddenly in June 1967 there were 16, and again in July, 16 of such meetings. After June the size of the armed bands increased from about 15 men to as many as 50.

(U) Not only is the insurgent movement small at present, but it is also relatively simple and unsophisticated. Indoctrination consists of basic instruction on discipline and security. Training covers very few specialized courses. Recruits are trained to point and shoot a gun, but they are not instructed in military tactics, possibly because at this stage there is no need for much practical application of such knowledge. The same applies to propaganda; the documents are not elaborate or complicated in style, but quite simplistic and straightforward. The activities are limited, but may be appropriate to the insurgents' goals in their present phase of development. The interesting analytical question is whether these rather primitive activities are sufficient to foster the rapid growth of the movement beyond its present stage.

Another characteristic of the Thai insurgency in its present stage is its ineptness and inefficiency. Like size, this should not be a reason to dismiss it as being no threat to the system. Communist insurrectionary movements lay great stress on learning from their mistakes.

The movement may well overcome its inefficiencies for at least three reasons: (1) the Thai Government is slow and often inept in its efforts to react to the threat; (2) the insurgents have considerable psychological appeal to unsophisticated villagers in spite of their errors; and, (3) the insurgents are able to be highly elusive during the early stages of their activity, making it extremely difficult for the government's forces to locate and confront them.

(U) Turning to the question of terror, the fact that terror and assassination are sparingly resorted to in Thailand (so far) does not necessarily reflect its potential at later stages. The purpose of terror at the current stage is not merely to demonstrate the insurgents' power to the villagers, but it is: (1) to root out the informants of the government's intelligence network who make it impossible for the insurgents to operate in the village; (2) to deny government presence in the village; and, (3) to intimidate and thus "neutralize" key villagers such as teachers and local government workers. When sufficiently frightened, these village workers will seek reassignment, move out of the village, or simply not perform their services vigorously. The incidence of terror in Thailand may be expected to increase as the insurrectionary movement grows.

(U) It is sometimes asserted that political terror cannot readily be distinguished from traditional banditry in Thailand. In the Northeast at least there seems to be little similarity or relationship between the two. There the insurgents have so far made a point of being the "good guys" and emphasizing their considerate behavior to the villagers. They point out that, "we live here, we're relatives, we're friends, and we don't hurt anybody." They may well feel that it would be counter-productive to absorb many of the bandit class. There have been some instances of extortion, but very little evidence of outright robbery. This may not be the case in other areas such as the mid-south or west-central part of Thailand, since in the latter area there is a long history of banditry.

The government's efforts to fight the terror and banditry have been severely hampered by the slowness of judicial processing.

Interrogators are so overworked that often, for some petty charge, a suspect may be held in custody for a year or more. Training of additional personnel is under way, and the situation may improve in time.

APPEAL AND RECRUITMENT OF INSURGENTS

(U) The appeal that the insurgency holds for the Thai at this stage appears to rest primarily on promises of personal gain and secondarily on exploitation of individual grievances. Specific motivations for joining include offers of education, arguments against high taxes, offers of status and rank, threats, and even entrapment. Broad social "aspirational" appeals do not constitute a major recruitment theme. For instance, a villager may join for the promise of money or education for himself, but not for a promise of improvement for the whole village. The insurgent propaganda does not appear to be directed toward such group goals. It may be argued that the policy of offering the villagers personal gain as a recruitment incentive is a long-run weakness of the movement. Offers of high pay and tractors may sway people in the short run to join the movement and become indoctrinated, but to sustain the motivation, other more meaningful identifications must be formed. Insurgents will not put up with the hardships of living in the bush, running from the government, and so forth, on the basis of a promise that eventually they may get a tractor.

The CT recruiters aim largely at the young unsettled men, but in Thailand they are not the very young as in Vietnam. "Young men" in Thailand may be defined as those between the ages of 20 and 35, because the settling down age in Thailand is later than elsewhere. The results of a survey of the age levels of Thai men approached by the CT showed the average to be 32. As for the recruiters, their average age was about 36, and the average age of the ordinary guerilla turned out to be 28 years. Because of the custom of late settling down among the young men, Thailand offers, at least initially, a fertile field for the recruiters. Whether the new recruits will stick, however, is another matter.

(U) Recruiting methods in Thailand are developing along the same lines as those in Vietnam. The armed propaganda team coming to the village does not aim to win the entire village over to its cause but will perhaps spot four or five young men who seem to respond, and work on them quietly over a period of time, recruiting on a person-to-person basis. There is follow-up built into the mode of operations, with repeated visits to the recruit, persistently manipulating his hopes and fears. Subsequently, there is heavy emphasis on indoctrination. Thus five in this village, five in the next village, and so forth, will gradually build up the movement. The cell method of recruiting X, who recruits Y, and who in turn recruits Z, has not been found successful because of the undependability of the Thai villager. Y may decide to drop out, the chain is thus broken, and the cell compromised.

(U) Entrapment of recruits is also a device used by the CT. For example, in one case a CT defector in Ubon said he joined the insurgents because he had allowed a recruiter to talk to him. It developed after further questioning that the overt attention of the recruiter was all that was needed to put this recruit in jeopardy, with a follow-up of working on his fears. In a second case villagers were coerced into the movement when a recruiter went around the village collecting signatures on a petition to build a well. No mention was made of political movements, front groups, and so forth. The villagers who signed were then informed by the recruiter that they had just joined the insurgents. The entrapment scheme could be used as it was in Vietnam by saying, "The government knows about you. The only alternative for you is to come with us or you will be arrested."

-- An element in the insurgents' recruiting approach is the effort to convince the villagers that communist ideas are the wave of the future, that they are on the winning side. The effectiveness of this effort is not known, however, other than in negative terms; namely, that most of those cooperating with the insurgents in Thailand are not ideologically motivated. It is estimated that only about 5 percent of the insurgents operating in the forest are hard-core members. Only 1

or 2 percent of the defectors or those arrested have been hard-core, which is -- even allowing for the expected disparity -- a very low rate. As a counter-recruiting device the government might well strive to create a greater esprit de corps among the lower-grade Thai civil servants working in the rural areas. These low-level government workers, of whom there are many at district level and below, do not now have much faith in their system. If such faith could be generated, they could become a more effective resistant force.

The issue that invariably offers the recruiters their greatest opportunities is one provided by the Government: official malfeasance. Misbehavior of government personnel, false arrest, prolonged detention, bribery and petty extortion serve the interests of the insurgent recruiters, and is often calculatedly provoked by them. Thus, insurgents' attacks are often carried out for the express purpose of eliciting an indiscriminately ruthless government response, including reprisals against villagers who "may have supported" the CT. In this vein, Thai troops now fighting in Vietnam may be exposed to the very unfortunate example of the inconsiderate treatment of Vietnamese villagers by GVN forces. If Thai troops, upon their return, treat their own villagers the way the GVN treats villagers, they will be creating CT recruits hand over fist. It was suggested that it may be wise to keep Thai troops returning from Vietnam out of the Northeast, using them perhaps for anti-coup defense in the cities.

RESOLVING THE UNCERTAINTIES

In sifting through the more or less dubious data on the Thai insurgency, it becomes evident that our existing state of knowledge is grossly inadequate. Indeed, it seems remarkable that U.S./RTG "counter-insurgency" programs would be so extensive when so little is known about the nature, causes, and dynamics of the insurgency. It is clearly imperative that a great deal more effort should be invested in information feedback, even to the extent of permitting programs to lag during the learning period. Wherever possible, U.S. programs should be designed from the outset as experimental undertakings whose principal

purpose would be to yield information, and particularly to increase our understanding of the factors that tend to promote or inhibit rebellion.

(U) One unconventional research approach to this latter task was proposed to the Seminar by Edward Mitchell, whose efforts to test certain hypotheses on causes of rebellion in Vietnam had persuaded him that such tests might be applicable to Thailand.* His approach was, first, to identify a number of villages under insurgent control and a number under government control, and, second, to obtain measurements of a number of factors that are usually assumed to contribute to or to determine the extent of rebel influence in the village. Some of the variables suggested were:

1. Unemployment and income levels,
2. Land distribution and extent of land reform,
3. Location of village and degree of isolation of village,
4. Information about the middlemen in the village and their relationships with government and peasants,
5. Production, preferably per capita, and extent to which production is in surplus and where marketed,
6. Other characteristics which might affect the insurgency-proneness of the village.

(U) If one assumes that the relationship between the measure of disloyalty or insurgency in the village and the variables above can be approximated by a simple linear equation, one can estimate the parameters and apply multiple regression techniques. In this way it is possible to discover statistically whether the factors normally assumed to encourage insurgency are actually contributing to it. The results will indicate, for example, whether more land reform or more government services are in fact associated with more or with less susceptibility to subversion.

(U) Several criticisms were leveled at this approach, insofar as it would apply to the village in Thailand:

* See Section II, p. 28.

1. Implicit in the approach is the assumption that the decision to support the insurgency in Thailand is a conscious one taken by the villagers. No weight is given to the enemy's decision as to whether or not to target a particular village. If it is, in fact, the insurgents' independent decision to go into a particular area, the results would have little predictive value for other areas.

2. In an early organizational stage of insurgency as in Thailand, there is no meaningful way in which villages can be differentiated as between "insurgent-controlled" and "government-controlled." The insurgents may continue over many months or even years to attempt to establish their influence over villages, with the success of these attempts remaining inconclusive. Susceptibility of villages to insurgency may therefore be very difficult to determine.

3. There is a danger in this kind of research mixing questionable data with good data. Some of the data on questions of motivation, for example, would almost inevitably be quite unreliable, and their questionable numerical values would tend to contaminate the computation.

(U) In the course of the Seminar discussion of priorities for further research, five problem areas were emphasized as being of particular importance in filling critical gaps in our knowledge of the insurgency and how to counteract it: (1) the insurgent organization, (2) the insurgent "image," (3) the villagers' perspective, (4) the government's information system, and (5) the government's strategic options.

The insurgent organization is probably the least well understood of the five topics. While the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) is recognized to be the immediate controlling instrument of the insurgency within Thailand and has clearly revealed itself to be a Maoist rather than a "revisionist" party, there appears to be little knowledge of the relative influence of Peking and Hanoi upon its policies and of their respective roles in its support. Since the potential for conflict between the two supporters is great and might offer opportunities for exploitation, this aspect of the insurgent organization deserves considerable attention. Analysis of radio propaganda broadcasts, captured documents, and prisoner or returnee interrogations might help to throw

some light on this issue. Also, while it is increasingly apparent that the numerous individual pockets of insurgent activity in the Northeast and the North are in some measure linked with each other and that some kind of primitive coordinating mechanism exists, little is known specifically about the command and control apparatus or about its geographic priorities for expanding the insurgent activity. Is it their intention, for example, to expand, like a spreading oil spot, from two or three nuclei, or will they seek to create numerous small pockets of rebellion in a band along the entire Thai-Lao border? What kinds of organizational forms or coordinating devices would be consistent with one or another of such alternatives?

The insurgent "image" is another feature about which we know relatively little. It seems clear that the CT do not stress abstract ideology in their recruitment approach, but they do appear to rely on family, clan, ethnic, and other traditional loyalties in their micro-organizing effort. To understand more about the potential appeal of the insurgents, it would be useful to know how they make themselves acceptable to the villagers, and how they combine threats and promises, association and intimidation. It may be possible to develop some insight into the image the CT create among the villagers by studying the forms of speech the villagers use to address them, the titles they give them, and what the villagers talk about after the CT leave.

The villagers' perspective often tends to be oversimplified when it is viewed in rudimentary categories like "protection and production." The problem from the villagers' point of view may be far more complex. They may wish fervently for protection from the CT, but may fear even more the government's heavy and sometimes extortionist hand when it provides that protection. It is important to know more about how ambivalently the villagers in fact regard the CT. Do they consider the CT as potential foes of the village, as potential allies in the struggle against an insouciant government and its "stooges" in the village, or as potential liberators from the American "imperialists"? It should be possible to learn more about this from the substantial number of people who have turned themselves in to the government after

defecting to the insurgents. Within this group, is it possible to differentiate between those who came back voluntarily and those who were taken back more or less forcefully? A most encouraging sign is the one or two cases in which whole villages have come to the government for protection after being intimidated or "controlled" by insurgents.

The government's information system is the all-important "eyes and ears" of the authority structure. In most developing societies -- and Thailand is no exception -- directives flow downward smoothly and in great abundance. But information does not flow upward without much hindrance and distortion. If the government's decisions and actions are to be wise, they must be based on adequate and accurate knowledge. The government's reporting system in Thailand, however, is deficient on both counts. It would be useful to know whether the Thai reporting mechanisms are systematically biased toward pessimism or toward optimism and to what extent the Thai Government serves as an unconscious filter for its own information. In Vietnam the reporting system has been optimistic -- "one final resource increment will put us over the top." In Thailand it may have a pessimistic bias -- so as to elicit larger resources. Is a reported increase in incident rates a real phenomenon or the result of a reporting system that is systematically biased or more active now than previously?

The government's strategic options tend not to be looked at very systematically. Given the many uncertainties discussed, it might be useful in developing alternative counterinsurgent measures to undertake a series of cost-benefit analyses of several strategies. For example, would an insurgent movement penetration system have higher payoffs than appeals to villagers? What is the operational significance of villager attitudes? If the chief appeal of insurgents is one of personal gain, why should the counterappeal be in the area of cultural development or in explanations of Thai Government policy? It might be interesting to make a cost-benefit analysis of a guaranteed annual wage as opposed to increased security, or to look at the implications of increasing rural-to-urban migration as a means of improving

villager welfare and reducing the supply of recruits to the insurgents. It is current U.S. policy to develop the Northeast in order to reduce the insurgency potential. But this may be inefficient both as a development and as a security strategy, in the sense that resources and organizational capability could be invested elsewhere more productively and with more tangible security effects. The fact that the Northeast has been neglected would seem to suggest that other areas have more potential for development. If that is the case, it might be more efficient to allocate resources to regions other than the Northeast -- say the central plain. Thus, a strategy of boosting labor-intensive urban manufacturing might pull people from the Northeast rural areas into the towns with both economic and security payoffs. We need a broader range of alternatives than the present concentration on Northeast economic development and on impact programs at the village level.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM DECISIONS

As suggested in the Introduction, the Seminar discussion surfaced much uncertainty concerning the nature and potentialities of the insurgency -- an uncertainty that makes the task of security-focused development programming a hazardous one. But even if there were near-perfect knowledge of the dynamics of the Thai insurgency, it is not clear that development programming there or anywhere could be undertaken with much confidence. An even greater uncertainty remains: just what is the impact of any development program upon a country's ability to resist or repel an insurrectionary assault? In the absence of a large and accepted body of knowledge in this area of development-security interactions, U.S. aid programs have tended to support conventional economic development endeavors or, alternatively, to promote a variety of rural and village-level benefit-conferring projects, accepting on faith the proposition that such endeavors and projects will have benign security consequences.

The Seminar discussion of how to improve the understanding of such interactions proved somewhat frustrating, with those responsible for program decisions seeking immediate answers, while those concerned with

research and analysis could offer only highly tentative approaches to sub-optimization, in which a few key variables would be carefully analyzed and related so that partial answers could gradually accumulate, ultimately yielding some improved insights. But any hope that a full-blown development program might be designed so as to achieve a predetermined set of authority-building objectives or to serve a specific security strategy may well remain illusory.

II. CONTRIBUTED PAPERS

COMMUNIST TERRORIST OPERATIONS IN NORTHEAST THAILAND:
ORGANIZATIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Richard G. Sharp

Research Analysis Corporation
Field Office - Thailand

In 1967 the Research Analysis Corporation's Thailand Field Office was asked by the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) to conduct a study of insurgent psychological operations, recruitment, and training in Thailand. This paper is based on work completed for that study, and most of the content is directly drawn from sections of the final research report. The emphasis here, however, is on the general characteristics of the current threat in Thailand, rather than on detailed findings of specific aspects of the study. The reader should note that some of the following commentary -- particularly that on villager and insurgent psychology -- is scantily supported by professional study and is frankly suggestive. Indeed, the author does not claim that any of the remarks below are definitive, but hopes they contribute to an understanding of the setting in which counterinsurgency and rural development efforts are taking place in Thailand.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Early developments in insurgency in Thailand do not appear to differ strikingly from those of several other cases of such conflict. The problem has arisen most notably in Northeast Thailand, an area which has suffered from government neglect, is considerably poorer than the central portion of the country, has a rather different ethnic composition, has some history of dissidence, and is proximate to possible areas of foreign support (Laos and Vietnam). As in other well-known cases, the objectives of the Thai insurgency are expressed in terms of national revolution and anti-imperialist struggle, and the movement is clearly directed by the national communist party (the Communist Party of Thailand or CPT), with a significant amount of foreign communist

support. Although the problem is currently most serious in the North-east, insurgent activity -- primarily propaganda and recruitment -- has been frequently reported elsewhere, particularly in the northern, west central, and mid-southern sections of the country. South Thailand, moreover, has the further problem of being a foreign sanctuary for the remnants of the Malayan communist guerrillas, although this group has not maintained an aggressive policy toward the Thai.

The development of insurgency remained a rather slow process up to about late 1964. In the early 1950s the CPT apparently determined to concentrate on rural areas, and farmers' "fronts" were set up in some areas, such as Ubon Province in the Northeast. A number of cadre also received training abroad during this period, notably in China. In the Northeast, CPT activity was accompanied by other subversive or potentially subversive developments, including communist activity among Vietnamese refugees from the Indochina War, Pathet Lao recruitment and other activities on the Thai side of the Mekong, and internal dissidence partially encouraged by leftist politicians following the dissolution of political parties in the late 1950s. A "Thai Exiles Association," formed abroad, was active into the early 1960s, and a former National Assemblyman from Sakon Nakhon Province was arrested and shot in 1961 for organizing insurgent groups in Northeast villages. Evidence of serious recruitment and organizational activity accumulated through the early 1960s, particularly in provinces near the Mekong border (Ubon, Nakhon Phanom, Sakon Nakhon, Nong Khai, and Udon). In late 1964 and early 1965 the formation of two Thai national front groups was announced on foreign communist radio (merging a year later). A clandestine Thai communist radio station, calling itself the "Voice of the People of Thailand," was established abroad. Violent incidents, such as assassinations of police informants and village-level officials, began to take place.

By mid-1965 small clashes with government units began to occur and by early 1966 were happening frequently. Small camps and propaganda meeting with forced village attendance began to appear with regularity. From mid-1966 into 1967 a gradual spread of insurgent incidents took

place, largely in previously inactive areas (at least in terms of incident frequency) in Sakon Nakhon Province. During this period the estimated number of armed insurgents rose from the low hundreds to almost two thousand, with estimates of numbers of supporters rising accordingly. From mid-1966 to mid-1967 incidents in the Northeast ranged from 50 to 75 per month, but with the direction of trend unclear. Incidents dropped off markedly in some of the old "hot areas" where additional security forces were placed, but popped up in new areas.

One area in Ubon Province has been affected by a large number of insurgent defections -- including several persons trained in a CPT school in Vietnam -- but groups in other areas appear to have maintained their cohesion in the face of government suppression activities. The degree of success in counterinsurgent operations currently appears mixed; both successes and inadequacies have been noted. Insurgent activity has continued to concentrate on recruitment, organization, and the establishment of a support base, with few offensive operations beyond some small ambushes and harassment of government units. Recovered internal insurgent documents indicate plans for a long-term struggle -- similar to the Vietnamese revolution -- and an expressed willingness to persist despite possible short-term setbacks.

The Thai insurgency to date thus closely resembles several other cases of communist-fostered internal war which have become familiar. Perhaps it is a particularly significant case, however, in that many of the factors often deemed necessary for the success of an insurgency are absent or less evident, and study of the Thai conflict may thus produce a better weighting of the relative importance of various "pre-conditions" for successful insurgency. Thailand, for example, has no colonial history, a rather minor problem of absentee landownership, and, in the Northeast, relatively open and accessible terrain. If the insurgency can succeed in spite of these evident disadvantages (or is suppressed only with difficulty and with a much more massive early counterinsurgent effort than conducted elsewhere), hypotheses suggesting the critical importance of these factors would require revision. Similarly, it has been suggested that the Thai insurgency has been

prematurely launched due to the desires of communists in and outside of Thailand to establish a second Southeast Asian front, possibly to relieve pressure in Vietnam. If this is true, the outcome of the conflict should yield clues to the relative importance of timing and proper organization versus inherent societal vulnerabilities. At present, however, it is too early to judge what the ultimate conclusion of the Thai conflict will be, and postulates based on the Thai case can only be tentative.

An additional aspect of the historical background outlined above that makes the Thai case particularly interesting is that the course of insurgency has not been closely tied to other important political movements in Thai society. The Thai conflict has been fostered by relatively small, extra-legal groups -- notably the CPT -- and implemented by clandestine and illegal organizers and guerrilla bands. Some persons have been drawn out of previously legal political parties, but these parties were transitory and short-lived. By contrast, other insurgent movements have often been connected with anticolonial organizations, political parties, unions, and various other organized interest groups. Such groups might or might not share the political objectives of the insurgents (overthrowing the government) or agree with their methods (armed conflict). Even organizations with gradual reformist aims, however, may contribute to the ultimate fall of the government; in fact, the government may succumb more because of the multiplicity of pressures from these various other sources than because of guerrilla activity itself, with the insurgents exploiting the resultant situation. In Thailand, manipulation of or cooperation with such groups is rendered impossible because of their insignificance, and "front" strategy has little substance. Consequently, the Thai case is an extreme one of "pure" insurgent conflict in which the aim of overthrowing the government through violent armed struggle is explicitly announced and is unobscured by surrounding political turmoil.

ORGANIZATIONAL-OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

One of the primary characteristics of Thai insurgent operations, as indicated above, is stress on propaganda, recruitment, internal

organization, and so on; that is, building the infrastructure. This characteristic should be generally valid for early phases of other insurgencies, with the exception of those that begin through takeover or redirection of an already extant movement; for example, a clandestine anticolonialist party after independence.

Obviously, the first step for an insurgent movement is propaganda and organizational work. This needs to be restated because the tendency of the United States has been to become involved in insurgent conflicts, such as Vietnam, rather late in the game. There is, consequently, some danger that experiences gained from a more developed conflict may be applied to a less-developed insurgency, where they would be inappropriate and could have negative repercussions for U.S. assistance and advice. When insurgents are concentrating on the initial development of human resources, the implication is that the movement has not yet developed an intricate, highly sophisticated physical-base system, risked losing its human assets in offensive military operations, nor developed a highly structured, functionally differentiated, and relatively permanent organizational system. This is borne out by available information on the Northeast Thailand situation and means that efforts directed at locating and destroying large base complexes and at defending against major guerrilla attacks would be premature. Similarly, overrating the sophistication of current insurgent organizations could lead to underestimating information available from persons picked up by the government or to improper targeting of defector appeals. In many respects the U.S. experience in Vietnam is, therefore, more relevant to contingency planning for later stages of conflict than for the level of insurgency currently found in Thailand.

To correct a possible misinterpretation of the above, there is evidence of extensive long- and medium-term insurgent planning and of a rational pattern of activities actually undertaken. Numbers of internal planning documents have been recovered, and incidents such as armed propaganda meetings occur in a consistent and predictable fashion across the Northeast. To say that the insurgent movement is not yet elaborately structured and specialized is not to deny that organization,

conscious direction, and coordination are taking place. The Thai insurgency no more consists of independent, pseudo-bandit groups than it approaches the highly-developed organizational pattern of the present Vietnamese insurgency. The examples of three types of insurgent activity given below (training, propaganda distribution, terror) illustrate the current level of insurgent organization and operations.

One indicator of the sophistication of early insurgent organization is the type of training given recruits. In Northeast Thailand this appears to consist mainly of political indoctrination, instruction in discipline and security, basic light-arms training, and instruction (often minimal) in small-unit tactics. As far as can be ascertained, training at the CPT camp in North Vietnam appears to be primarily a more intensive and extensive version of localized training. The only specialized instruction reported appears to be in medical support and, predictably, in propaganda and recruitment. There are no reports of specialized training courses in logistics, communications, large-unit operations, weapons and equipment maintenance, and so forth; thus, it would follow that the number of specially prepared personnel in specialized fields must be rather small. Most support personnel appear to receive "on-the-job" training only, and one person often performs several tasks or frequently moves from one to another. Guerrilla leaders, for example, are often reported as engaging in recruitment, conducting indoctrination or military training, acting as liaison with another group, or setting up logistics arrangements. The ordinary "jungle soldier" may be shifted from a food acquisition unit to courier work, to guard duty, to intelligence collection in nearby villages, and so on. Truly specialized personnel, in other words, appear to be restricted to fairly high-level cadre with responsibilities beyond individual tactical guerrilla units. In terms of countermeasures, the key individuals at the guerrilla-unit level who should be targeted for psychological and other actions are mainly the aforementioned leaders, rather than the few technically trained personnel. The exception is probably the propagandist-recruiter.

A related indicator of organizational-operational sophistication is the kind of propaganda used to support insurgent psychological operations in the early stages. This is limited by the forms of insurgent strategy, which may place emphasis on developing a tangible support base rather than on producing general sympathy for the cause. Guerrilla strategy -- in Thailand, that is -- does not envision a broad, loosely-organized national upheaval doing the trick, but rather sees the slow and deliberate growth of guerrilla and political organization based on a core of committed followers and soundly constructed support at each step. Overextension of propaganda and recruitment activities at the expense of organizational development is a primary danger stressed in guerrilla theory.

In the Thai case, propaganda distributed nationally evidently is designed to give a certain amount of respectability to the ephemeral national fronts, to provide material for cadre in particular areas, and, to some extent, to harass and confuse the government. This material is produced under spartan conditions (usually a simple mimeograph process), with fairly wide distribution achievable at low expense. Propaganda and recruitment personnel, however, are largely concentrated in those areas where insurgent activity is underway (for example, the critical provinces in the Northeast), or where it is beginning to develop (the mid-South and west-Central areas). The written propaganda material needs of these persons are relatively limited and satisfied by primitively-produced documents (for example, hand-operated mimeograph or ditto). Large caches of documents discovered in the Northeast (sometimes over 400-500 documents) indicate no pressing problem of supply, and any difficulties encountered probably lie in timely distribution. The limiting factor in the propaganda effort is largely the human one -- providing capable organizers to transform sympathetic persons into a secure base -- followed by financial, weapons, and materiel shortages when the objective is to establish guerrilla units.

The development of insurgent psychological operations is simplified by the fact that they do not go in for frills, fads, or fancy stuff. Written propaganda, for example, is marked by absence of

photographs, illustrations, cartoons, elaborate format, and so on. The objective is to produce a message geared to the level of comprehension of the target audience and emphasizing content. Similarly, in verbal approaches the emphasis is usually on getting the person involved -- using anything from political arguments to sheer deception -- and then, through indoctrination or manipulation of his fears, holding him in. The approach is certainly economical and, given proper follow-up, is not necessarily less effective than more sophisticated methods. There could well be a lesson in this for American psychological operations advisors, whose approach to propaganda is likely to be colored by the elaborate advertising techniques current in the United States. Addressed to an uninformed villager, the simple, direct approach may best avoid misunderstanding.

Another important component of insurgent operations is the use of terror. Here it is important to distinguish between the impact of terror and the number of terrorist incidents. In practice, the North-east insurgents have been quite selective in the use of assassinations, beatings, and similar acts, normally confining them to police informants and those who are government spokesmen, such as village chiefs and teachers. The number of such incidents is relatively small. The point, however, is that even if only one person is killed in a given area, villagers are going to be more reluctant to cooperate with the government or refuse requests from the insurgents. Over half of a number of persons detained on suspicion of supporting the insurgents cited threats and manipulation of fear as a technique used to get them involved, although the number of actual killings in their areas was not exceptionally large.

Government propaganda emphasizing insurgent brutality and ruthlessness can backfire in such a situation. The villager may be made to expect the guerrilla to be an indiscriminate killer and be somewhat impressed when he finds a guerrilla recruiter treating most of the villagers with reasonable respect and being little different from the villagers themselves. If the insurgent does kill an official or informant, he is likely to justify the act in terms of necessity and the

current or ultimate good of the villagers. Even if the villager does not agree, he may comprehend the insurgent's reasoning and follow the recommended path to keep out of trouble. At the same time, government propaganda may reinforce the insurgent's own threats of dire consequences if the villager is not cooperative. In short, the government may be better off to stress the hardships of insurgent life, the impossibility of guerrilla success, and the foolishness of the villager getting involved, rather than the bloodier aspects of insurgent behavior.

In summary: training, propaganda distribution, and terror are all restrained by the limited goals of Thai insurgents. That is, they play specific tactical roles in supporting the development of the movement within strategic guidelines. Further, the capabilities needed in each of these areas are limited by the selective and limited tactical goals. Since the Thai insurgents do not expect a sudden quantum jump to the level of conflict in Vietnam (this is constantly repeated in CT internal documents), these restricted capabilities and the lack of organizational sophistication associated with them are tolerable. At the same time, current capabilities in these and other areas provide a base upon which the insurgents can gradually develop the assets needed for later, more intensive conflict.

MOTIVATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE INSURGENTS

"Rising expectations" are reflected in the motivations of villagers joining or supporting insurgent groups. Such expectations, as far as could be ascertained from interrogations and other data on persons becoming involved, are manifested more in terms of heightened personal desires than in expectations of general societal improvements. That is, the villager may see and want the benefits of higher education, mechanical assistance in farming, and so on, and may be attracted by the life of an official, military officer, or small businessman, but he does not appear to be deeply motivated by the possibilities of broad structural changes in village life. He sees possibilities for personal advance and can extend these desires to his family and perhaps his village, but beyond this level, aspirations begin to take on the

character of vague wishes and lose impetus as serious motivational factors. As a pragmatic individual, the villager recognizes that individual personal gains are easier to realize than general advancements, and he may consequently be rather skeptical of sweeping government promises. At the same time, the desirability of modernization and reform may be recognized sufficiently to be used as a justification following the individual's involvement in subversive activity.

It is not surprising, therefore, that when one examines recruitment appeals and the reasons given for involvement, the overwhelming majority involve personal gain -- either the offer of immediate rewards, longer range advancement, or simply freedom from ill consequences (that is, warnings that villagers will suffer at either insurgent or government hands if he does not cooperate). The insurgent may also promise modernization and reform, but even here the arguments are commonly cast in terms of removing present difficulties rather than in terms of progressive development, for example, lowering or eliminating taxes, overthrowing a corrupt government, throwing out imperialists, or destroying oppressive officials. Insurgent appeals are thus of a different magnitude than government promises and may be more understandable and believable to the villager. While the villager may have little faith that the government will substantially improve overall village life in Northeast Thailand, he may well believe that he can earn money and rank in the insurgent movement, might be awarded a tractor if the movement succeeds, that taxes and official regulations will become less burdensome, and that his village may perhaps particularly benefit in return for early support of the movement.

This mentality has serious implications for the role of development activities in counterinsurgency programs, but the point is not that such activities are doomed to ineffectiveness. The problem is that while community aspirations for a better life are being expressed with increasing impatience, development programs designed to meet these aspirations have often been insufficiently explained. When such programs seemingly fail to make progress, the villager's vulnerability to subversive appeals may, in fact, be increased. In short, the problem may be less one of aspirations than of lack of knowledge. That is, the individual villager

scarcely understands the conception and complexities of the process of development; nonetheless, he does get a partial view of the results of development, and this may well affect his attitude. In this case we may speculate that lack of comprehension and the resulting misguided perspectives might lead to the following villager reactions and attitudes:

- a) The villager may easily be duped by promises of farm equipment, rank, important or exciting positions, and so forth. He has no knowledge of such factors as cost and uses of equipment, the responsibilities attached to various kinds of work or the skills and training necessary, but only a general awareness of such things as machinery or bureaucratic positions. He may not even have high aspirations to obtain these things, but his curiosity and uninformed interest render him open to subversive exploitation.
- b) He may take inordinate risks once a goal is set. He does not yet perceive that steady, continuing progress is possible for himself or his children, and he lacks understanding of the process whereby to attain the better positions and wealth he does see. The idea of rising to the top by dynamic action (the Horatio Alger myth) may lead him directly into an insurgent group. Again, the deciding factor is not impatience, but lack of understanding of how gains may be achieved.
- c) He may be willing to accept extremely simplistic ideas as to what the obstacles to development are. If the villager sees a gap between development promises and performance, he may attribute it to governmental malintent, to foreign interference, and so on. He is less likely to perceive the structural problems of economic development; and government propaganda that stresses plans for improvement or examples of progress, rather than the obstacles involved, does little to make his attitude more realistic.
- d) Finally, when changes of which he is aware are slow in coming to his particular village, the villager may become convinced that he is being neglected. He may not necessarily have a strong desire for many of these changes, but he knows that they are accepted as improvements outside his village and suspects that they may be connected with status.

As noted above, he may attribute the unevenness of development to mal-intent and may logically conclude that he and his village are deliberately being denied proper attention.

Granted that the government should try to make good on most of its promises, the implication of the above for development programs is not primarily that the emphasis should be solely on performance. However well-intentioned and capable the government may be, there will still be major inequalities in the pace of development, and some areas of the country, such as parts of Northeast Thailand, will be particularly difficult to develop rapidly. Along with sincere efforts to develop poorer areas, there must be a major government information effort, to persuade the villagers of the government's good intentions and to inject realism into village attitudes toward economic and social changes. This should include information on the complexities involved in developing an economy, the skills and preparation needed to perform various roles in a changing society, the costs of development projects, and so on. The villager should be provided with opportunities to improve his lot, but he should also be made to realize that he has little chance of getting a tractor to cultivate his 4 or 5 rai of land and why this is so. He should be convinced that the government is trying to assist him, but he should also be aware of how much the new road 40 miles away costs. Until the villager acquires a reasonable perspective of economic development, he will remain vulnerable to spurious appeals.

However, the villager psychology described is not a problem for the government only. Because the villager's desires are for personal gain and because his actions are often based on misconceptions of what he can get rather than on strong motivations, he can be an extremely unreliable recruit for the insurgency, too. The Northeast villager who joins the insurgents because he thought he would get a tractor and a few hundred baht, may well defect as soon as he sees that fulfillment of the promises is a long way off at best. Similarly, a significantly large number of insurgents who were given intensive indoctrination and training in Vietnam subsequently turned themselves in, once life in the jungle proved rough. Easily misled through ignorance, the villager is also easily

disillusioned. This places a heavy burden upon the insurgent movement to maintain a degree of continued success, for once activity is badly disrupted, there may well not be enough ideological commitment to carry the group through.

INSURGENT EFFICIENCY AND EARLY ADVANTAGES

Consideration of the motivations for supporting or joining the insurgents leads directly into the question of the degree of efficiency of an insurgent movement in its early stages. If it is assumed that a high percentage of personnel join the movement for essentially opportunistic and shortsighted reasons, then the movement probably must allow a wide latitude for mistakes, inefficiency, and generally second-rate activity. Yet, there is only one sector of insurgent operations in Northeast Thailand (northern Ubon Province) for which a good case can be made that the movement collapsed largely due to unreliable personnel. In spite of personnel difficulties, most other areas have maintained a serious incidence of activity, and there has been a relatively steady spread of activity to new areas.

A look at other cases of insurgency in their early phases will confirm the common existence of tentative and error-ridden beginnings. The Soviet and Chinese revolutions, no less than the Cuban, Philippine, Lao, and other more recent insurgencies, were fraught with difficulties. Whether ultimately successful or not, these insurgencies created innumerable problems for the constituted authorities despite a large number of insurgent internal weaknesses. The problem is not limited to opportunistic and unreliable recruits, and many parallels to the situation in Thailand can be found elsewhere. The breaking up of the Philippine Central Committee as a result of security weaknesses, for example, was an event strikingly similar to the recent mass arrests of high-level communists in Thailand. Lack of imagination in propaganda appeals, difficulties in the conduct of armed propaganda -- a problem for the Northeast Thailand insurgents today -- are cited by General Giap as serious problems in the Vietnamese revolution in the late 1940s. Food and logistics difficulties, which often are noted by surrendered and

arrested Northeast insurgents, have often appeared in other conflicts -- in Malaya, for example, such difficulties occurred long before the end of the Emergency. All this, however, is hardly surprising when one considers that such movements begin clandestinely, must build a support base with severe constraints on their choice, recruitment, and training of personnel, and -- if they are to enjoy any success -- must rapidly develop the organization with problems of adaption and reorientation occurring frequently.

To sum up, in the early stages of insurgency, certainly in Thailand, one is dealing not with a ruthlessly efficient opponent, but with a relatively inefficient one who, nevertheless, possesses certain "natural" advantages that make suppression difficult. One of these advantages is, of course, that it may take the government some time to adapt to an armed internal threat and to develop a response that does not simply exacerbate the situation. The Thai Government response, for example, has been rather encouraging, but it is seriously constrained by such factors as the presumed necessity to maintain a balance among military, police, and civilian components; difficulties in properly training and equipping suppression units; problems in adapting criminal law and philosophy to allow for the proper handling of persons involved in the insurgent movement, and so on. Though it has been recognized for over three years that a serious insurgent threat exists, the process of adjusting to counterinsurgent operations is by no means over in Thailand.

A second factor is that initial insurgent emphasis on propaganda and psychological operations hits an area in which government understanding is liable to be least adequate. For historical reasons and because of the social structure, the Bangkok bureaucrat is unlikely to appreciate the position of the villager faced with an insurgent recruiter; neither is he willing and able to engage in psychological competition at that level. Even given a sympathetic urban attitude toward the targeted villagers and a desire to respond, it is difficult to counteract the psychological impact of many insurgent actions; for example, to justify the government's inability to provide adequate security to the villages or to explain to the man offered 200 baht

to join the insurgents that the government is trying to help him but that there is a limit to what it can do. The manner of presentation is the critical element, and most governments are initially unequipped to do an effective job.

Finally, the very simplicity and limited extent of insurgent operations in their early stages pose a problem for effective suppression. The number of armed insurgents in Northeast Thailand, for example, is rarely estimated above 2000, and cutting off weapons flow needed to support such a small number of guerrillas is difficult at best. Similarly, production of written propaganda is accomplished in fairly primitive facilities that could be located almost anywhere. The volume of propaganda materials passing through the mails is such a small percentage of total letters, that an effective mail censorship program might be virtually out of the question. The training courses and facilities needed for low-level insurgent personnel are unsophisticated; training is consequently difficult to disrupt, and camps are hard to locate and destroy. Interdependence among insurgent groups in various areas is limited by the kinds of operations undertaken; consequently, the disruption of a group in one area may have little impact on units elsewhere. In other words, as long as the movement is in a phase of propaganda and recruitment activity, with individual units small and loosely coordinated, it constitutes an elusive target for counter-insurgent operations.

To avoid serious misjudgments of the situation, it is imperative to recognize that (1) an insurgent movement is an imperfectly functioning organization in its early stages and (2) that there are inherent difficulties in early suppression. In Thailand one frequently hears persons dismiss the Northeast insurgency as a "second-rate operation" that will probably never get off the ground and express doubt as to the seriousness of the whole operation. On the other hand, severe criticisms of Thai Government failures in suppression of the insurgency with occasionally alarmist overtones are as frequent. Unless a proper perspective of structural difficulties for both the insurgent and counterinsurgent is achieved, planning for counterinsurgency programs and program evaluations may be unrealistic.

RELATING REBELLION TO THE ENVIRONMENT:
AN ECONOMETRIC APPROACH

Edward J. Mitchell*

The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California

Knowledge of the conditions that give rise to rebellious behavior should be among the most valuable assets of a policymaker charged with the security of an underdeveloped nation. Yet little in the way of systematic research has been done relating rebellion to the circumstances that produce and sustain it. This is not to say that there aren't a number of existing hypotheses. Each time a policy decision is made, there is presumably a corresponding theory being invoked implicitly. This theory would typically be based upon experience, introspection, or simple intuition.

What I would like to discuss here is a procedure by which one can test theories about the determinants of rebellion. This approach should be applicable to those nations that have experienced an insurgency and possess some data on the insurgency and the factors affecting it. The approach has been used in Vietnam and is now being applied to the post-war Huk uprising in the Philippines. From what I have been able to discover about data sources, it should also be applicable to Thailand.

* Any views expressed in this paper are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of The RAND Corporation or the official opinion or policy of any of its governmental or private research sponsors. Papers are reproduced by The RAND Corporation as a courtesy to members of its staff.

One way of introducing this approach is to pose the following questions: What are the observed characteristics of rebellious villages or provinces? What distinguishes these villages or provinces from loyal ones? To each theory there corresponds some set of characteristics. Testing the theory is largely a matter of comparing hypothesized characteristics with actual ones. If one argues that government neglect--that is, the relative absence of government services--is one of the causes of rebellion, then villages under rebel influence ought to be characterized by an absence of government services. If poverty is supposed to contribute to rebellion, then disloyal villages ought to be relatively poor. This must seem a trivial and obvious requirement of a theory, yet this kind of test is rarely if ever performed systematically, and I suspect that many of the commonly accepted notions about insurgency would not survive it.

One requirement is that we must be able to define and measure "rebelliousness" or "disloyalty." In the Philippines the Constabulary recorded various characteristics of barrios during the Huk insurgency. I have, for example, a list of barrios in which the local officials and the bulk of the peasantry actively supported (willingly or not) the Hukbalahap. This is a fairly strict criterion. I hope to get a list of barrios in which there was some degree of Huk influence. This would presumably be a much larger list. As an overall measure of Huk influence I have used thus far the percentage of barrios in a municipality that met this strict criterion of Huk control. (A barrio typically contains about 1000 people and there are about 20-25 barrios per municipality. There are roughly 80 municipalities in Central Luzon, the main area of Huk strength.) How, in general, one should choose measures of rebel influence or government control is difficult to say. This is really a question that goes well beyond the scope of the present paper. In practical cases it is likely that this will not present a serious problem of choice to the researcher, since the army or police will probably have made it for him.

It is also clear that we must have measurements on those factors that are supposed to promote rebellion. If poverty is thought to

contribute to insecurity, then we ought to have measures of real income: for example, farm output per family, landlord-tenant shares, average diets, etc. If certain government programs are thought to reduce the likelihood of support for rebels, then data on variables such as miles of roads, water systems, and educational opportunities should be available. In no underdeveloped country will all the relevant data be at hand. The Philippines is a rather good country for data. Thailand, from what I have heard, is comparable to Vietnam, having had an agricultural but not a population census. The significant results obtained in my Vietnam study are, therefore, encouraging for a Thai study.

Given measurements on security and the factors that are theoretically supposed to determine security, we cannot simply compare or correlate these measures. By itself a finding that higher literacy occurs generally in secure areas does not imply that education has a favorable impact on security. First, it may be that literacy is merely associated with some factor that does have a positive effect on security--for example, income. The causation might run: higher incomes cause greater security; higher incomes cause greater literacy. Literacy and security may then be statistically correlated, but there is no structural relationship between them. Second, there may be a structural relationship between literacy and security, but the causation may run the other way. Suppose that areas that had been insecure for some time did not obtain teachers or educational equipment from the government and that the rebels had poor educational programs. Literacy would be low in insecure areas because security was low, not the other way round. Finally, there might be a pair of structural relationships between literacy and security with causation running in both directions.*

These examples make it clear that simple correlations will often be useless. The problem is that when there are many variables, and many relationships among these variables, the full complexity of the world cannot be captured in a simple correlation.

* Incidentally, these examples have not been chosen for their realism, but only for their pedagogical value.

The approach that I am suggesting is one that economists have been using for some time. The economic system is represented by a set of equations--behavioral, institutional, technological, and definitional. The variables in these equations are all those that the economist is interested in--prices, wages, employment--plus all those that must be taken into account if we are to explain the economic variables--family size, weather, technological conditions. A representative equation in an economic system would be the demand equation, or demand curve, relating the quantity of a good purchased to its price, the prices of other goods, income, family size, age, and so forth. Each decision made by "economic man" can be represented by a behavioral equation. The equation enables us to determine what an individual or group will choose to do, given the objective costs and benefits associated with the various choices and given the tastes or attitudes of those making the choices. In the demand equation the price of the good is an objective cost; the age of the consumer is a variable characterizing the consumer himself and therefore his likely tastes and attitudes.

I see no reason why the political system cannot be thought of in the same way. Whether a village is government- or rebel-controlled is a consequence of decisions made by people, individually or collectively, in that village. Their decision will be a function of the objective costs and benefits attached to alternative choices, and of the basic attitudes of these people toward the rebels and toward the existing order. There is then an equation relating the degree of security or control in an area to the "prices" of various actions in the area, and to those characteristics that determine the basic attitudes of the population.

* Theories of insurgency probably differ not so much in stating how people will react to changes in costs or prices. We can generally agree that higher costs will tend to dissuade people from choosing a particular activity. Where they differ significantly is in positing what the characteristics of a rebel-held area will be. Is it likely to be poor, neglected by the government, with a generally uneducated population, or otherwise? This is the kind of question that we hope to be able to answer.

Unfortunately, estimation of the "rebellion equation" is not straightforward. There are variables affecting the disloyalty of a village that are also affected by disloyalty. The example given earlier shows that education can affect rebellion, and rebellion affect education, and also that both may affect each other simultaneously. There then exist additional structural relationships or equations between these variables. In this case the rebellion equation can be estimated properly only by taking into account these other relations. (In many cases the "rebellion equation" cannot be estimated at all due to the presence of these relations.) This is a very complex subject and I do not wish to go into it very far here. I shall instead focus on what can be done in a rather simple manner without requiring much in the way of a priori knowledge of all the equations involved.

It can be shown that it is appropriate to estimate a "rebellion equation" directly, providing that the variables determining rebellion may all be regarded as exogenous, that is, determined themselves by factors other than rebellion. Topographical variables are an excellent example. It may be argued that topography affects the likelihood of a village being rebellious. It is often said that guerrilla movements thrive in remote, inaccessible areas. But it is quite impossible to argue that rebellion affects topography. A region does not become mountainous because a rebellion is taking place there. Thus there can be no ambiguity about causation here.

Most variables assumed to be exogenous are not as obviously so as topography. Nevertheless, it will generally be possible to characterize variables as being primarily exogenous if any existing reverse causation is very weak.

If we can assume that this equation, with a measure of rebelliousness on one side and exogenous variables on the other, can be approximated by an equation linear in the parameters, then simple least-squares linear multiple regression can be applied to estimate the parameters and test hypotheses concerning them. To be concrete, let me give you some results from my Vietnam study. The variable to be explained there was the percentage of hamlets in a province under government control.

These hamlets were determined from a detailed map published in the Los Angeles Times showing areas under government and Viet Cong control, or contested. The map was derived from U.S. government sources. The exogenous variables were obtained primarily from the 1960-61 Vietnamese Census of Agriculture, and AID reports. They included measures of tenancy, inequality in the sizes of land holdings, the presence of large estates, land redistribution, population density, road density, cross-country mobility, rice production per capita, and regional effects.

The motivation for including land tenure variables in the equation was to examine the plausibility of the hypothesis that greater inequalities in land tenure increase the likelihood of rebellious behavior. This is certainly a very widely held expectation. The rice production per capita variable is a proxy for real incomes and thus helps us to evaluate the "poverty" hypothesis. All other variables have fairly obvious theories associated with them.

After statistical estimation the equation, including only variables that were found to be statistically significant, looked like this:

$$C = 6.47 - .36 OOL + 28.3 CV - 1.36 VL$$

$$+ .89 FL - .37 M + .09 PD,$$

$$\frac{R^2}{R} = .68,$$

where:

C is the percentage of secure hamlets as calculated from Los Angeles Times Map (1965)

OOL is the percentage of all land that is owner-operated

CV is the coefficient of variation of the distribution of land holdings by size

VL is the percentage of land subject to transfer under the Diem Land Reform Program that was formerly Vietnamese owned--approximately half of these estates

FL is the percentage of land subject to transfer under the Diem Land Reform Program that was formerly French owned--virtually none of these estates were redistributed by 1965

PD is population density

M is the percentage of area of good cross-country mobility

\bar{R}^2 is the coefficient of determination adjusted for degrees of freedom (an estimate of the proportion of the variance of control explained by the independent variables)

The principal conclusion to be drawn from the equation is that inequality in land tenure implies greater government control. The coefficients of each of the four land tenure variables suggest this. Higher tenancy, more unequal distribution of farms by size and less redistribution mean more control. Population density seems to contribute positively to control whereas greater cross-country mobility makes a negative contribution.

The six variables taken together explain about two-thirds of the variance of control over twenty-six provinces. This explanation is due primarily to the land tenure variables. Thus, not only do various types of inequalities in land tenure appear to have an effect opposite to that suggested by the hypothesis, but they in fact assume great importance in this "perverse" role. This is not the place to discuss in detail the interpretation of this phenomenon.* I would only say that upon further reflection and reading of the historical literature on rebellion the initial expectation is seen to have been unwarranted. There are enough historical cases similar to the Vietnam situation to indicate that the expectation should never have been confidently held.

There is no guarantee that the equation resulting from a study of Thailand or any other country will be as provocative as the Vietnam

* The reader is referred to my RM-5181-ARPA (Abridged), Land Tenure and Rebellion: A Statistical Analysis of Factors Affecting Government Control in South Vietnam, June 1967, P-3610, Inequality and Insurgency: A Statistical Study of South Vietnam, June 1967 (both RAND publications), and my article in the August 1967 issue of Asian Survey.

equation. Nevertheless, the Vietnam findings suggest that we may be entertaining notions about the relationship between rebellion and the environment that seriously disagree with reality. The only means by which we can improve our position is by further research. There are a number of recent rebellions and civil wars that could possibly be studied along the lines I have suggested in this paper. Besides Vietnam the list would include conflicts in the Philippines, China, and Thailand in Asia. The Spanish Civil War, and, going back further into history, the English Civil War and French Revolution represent possible European studies. These researches may or may not produce much in the way of general theories about rebellions and revolutions, but again there is no way of determining this except by carrying them out.